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AUTHOR Wagner, Judith O.
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INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Columbus, Ohio.
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ABSTRACT

How to locate information that can be used in career decision making is the subject of this digest. The first section lists the career/occupational information collections generally found in public libraries, including printed resources, information about associations, information about local sources of job information, information on specific careers, information about potential employers, information on special populations, information on job search methods, and sample military and civil service tests. The next section points out that most state departments of education have career information systems that are available to just about anyone and also describes such a system (the Ohio Career Information System). Tips on accessing a state occupational information system are given. The section on school career centers includes information on the holdings of secondary and postsecondary career education or guidance offices. An eight-item annotated bibliography concludes the document. (CML)

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LOCATING JOB INFORMATION

More and more people are looking for and changing jobs and careers more often. There are workshops, books, journals, special sections of newspapers, and many other sources for the person who is considering a new career or a career change. Good sources of occupational information are public libraries, state departments of education, and high school and postsecondary career centers. This **ERIC Digest** discusses how to locate information that can be used in career decision making.

Public Library

Public libraries in most cities have career/occupational information collections. Although specific services and titles available may differ, the basic collections are very similar. These collections include the following:

- o Printed resources in the library--
  - --lists of local, state, and federal government job opportunities and how to apply for them
  - --newspapers from all over the country
  - --state and local job listings
  - --bibliographies of resources on various aspects of a job search
  - --special supplements and job-hunters' newspapers
  - --lists of foreign job opportunities and how to apply for them
  - --descriptions of all types of jobs
- o Information about associations--
  - --directories with names, addresses, publications, convention information
  - --joblines or hotlines with information about employment in the profession
  - --information about interviews at conferences
  - --information on workshops and seminars
- o Information about local sources of job information, workshops, and so forth
- o Information on specific careers--
  - --salary levels
  - --qualifications/education required
  - --benefits
  - --job market outlook
  - --job descriptions
  - --aptitude/interest tests
- o Information about potential employers, such as--
  - --size of company
  - --location of offices
  - --types of jobs available
  - --salaries
- o Information for special populations--
  - --people over 40
  - --women
  - --minorities
  - --handicapped
  - --midlife career changers
- o Information on job search methods--
  - --how to decide which career is best for you
  - --how to write a resume
  - --how to prepare for an interview
- o Sample military and civil service tests

Most public as well as university libraries have sample tests for specific occupations such as air traffic controller, beginning office worker, and mail handler, as well as general tests and other materials that would prepare you for any civil service test, for example, tests for women in the armed forces, practice for Army classification, general test practice for 101 jobs, home study course for civil service jobs, and mastering writing skills for civil service advancement.

The career information is in a variety of formats. Some public libraries have regularly scheduled workshops on locating information about occupations; they all have reference and circulating copies of books; they might have bibliographies or a pamphlet file with information about specific careers as well as about writing resumes, preparing for interviews, and so on. They may also have a listing of the jobs available through their state Bureau of Employment Services.

State Departments of Education

Most state departments of education have career information systems that are available to just about anyone through a variety of delivery systems. For example, the Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) is a computer-based guidance information system that provides instantaneous access to a wealth of educational and occupational information. Houghton Mifflin's Guidance Information System (GIS) provides the primary national data and the Department of Education adds details about Ohio. Information in the database includes employment projections, salary levels, job descriptions, financial aid opportunities, lists of various postsecondary schools, military occupations, entrepreneurship programs--a total of 13 separate files. OCIS is available through 26 data

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CENTER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
1900 KENNY ROAD • COLUMBUS, OHIO 43210
Telephone: (614) 292-4353 or (800) 848-4815

centers, in many local school districts, and in public libraries.

Those who want to access their state occupational information system should go either to their local public library or to the state department of education. If the system is not available for public access through the state department, individuals will be referred to an appropriate source.

School Career Centers

In addition to the public library, secondary and postsecondary career or guidance offices have information on specific careers. Often called the Office of Career Development, their services include a resource room, workshops, and other career-related programs. Typical topics covered are career planning, resume writing, job search methods, and interviewing. They also have interest inventories that will make career decision making a little easier. Again, if you have decided on the career that is best for you, they have information on specific jobs just as the public library does.

What Does This Mean?

What this means is that everyone has access to information about deciding upon a career, writing a resume, looking for a job, interviewing, and keeping a job. There are materials on the job market outlook, salary levels, opportunities for advancement in a given career, and working conditions. The best place to start when looking for information on a new career is the career information department of your public library.

Although each library and career center will have its own collection of resources on occupational information, there are some standard reference sources. They include the following:

The Career Guide. **1989.** Parsippany, NJ: Dun's Employment Opportunities Directory, 1988.

This guide contains up-to-date, comprehensive, accurate coverage on employers and career opportunities. It includes lists of U.S. companies with 1,000 or more employees with the name and address of the company, an overview of the company, what opportunities are available, location of offices, benefits, and the name of a contact person.

Career Information Center. 3rd ed. Mission Hills, CA: Glencoe/Macmillan, 1987.

The ***Career Information Center*** consists of 600 occupational profiles in which 3,000 jobs are discussed. The profiles include work characteristics, job entry, education and training requirements, advancement possibilities, employment outlook, and earnings and benefits.

Gale, Barry, and Gale, Linda. ***Discover What You're Best at: The National Career Aptitude System and Career Directory.*** New York: Simon and Shuster, 1982.

This self-administered and self-scored career aptitude evaluation system is designed to help identify career strengths, set career goals, evaluate one's job potential, and familiarize oneself with possible careers.

Hopke, William E., editor-in-chief. ***The Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance.*** 7th ed. Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Co., 1987.

This encyclopedia is based on the ***Dictionary of Occupational Titles.*** The three-volume work includes detailed information on careers, personality needed for specific jobs, education required, available opportunities, related occupations, and beginning salary levels.

Toropon, Brandon, managing ed. ***1988 National Job Bank.*** 4th ed. Boston, MA: Bob Adams, Inc., 1987.

The ***National Job Bank*** discusses common areas of hiring activity, educational background needed, and benefits offered for specific occupations. It includes names, addresses, and phone numbers of those to contact for information about available jobs. It also includes a state-by-state list of companies, what they do, and whom they hire.

U.S. Department of Labor. ***Dictionary of Occupational Titles.*** 4th ed. Washington, DC: U.S. Employment Service, 1977.

The ***Dictionary of Occupational Titles*** (DOT) gives comprehensive, standardized descriptions of duties of 20,000 occupations. It is designed to match job requirements and worker skills.

U.S. Department of Labor. ***Occupational Outlook Handbook.*** 1988-89 ed. Washington, DC: DOL, April 1988.

This handbook includes information about specific jobs, working conditions, training and education needed, projected earnings, and job prospects.

Wright, John W. ***The American Almanac of Jobs and Salaries. 1987-88 Edition.*** 3rd ed. New York: Avon, 1987.

This almanac includes job descriptions, predictions for employment opportunities, salary data by place, jobs for recent college graduates, and a comparison of salary by city/region/state/company for all types of jobs.

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